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Identical letters dated 23 May 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a position paper by the Organization of the Islamic Conference concerning the issue of the Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and missing persons in Iraq.

The position paper describes the efforts that have been made by OIC over the past nine years in seeking to resolve this humanitarian issue.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mansour Ayyad Sh. A. **Al-Otaibi**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Position paper by the Organization of the Islamic Conference concerning the issue of the Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and missing persons in Iraq

Motivated by its concern over the past nine years at the issue of the Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and missing persons in Iraq, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is continuing the efforts it has been making through available channels with the parties concerned with a view to a speedy resolution that will allow those affected to return to their own countries and will bring a definitive end to this long-standing humanitarian issue.

OIC, which has had the deepest sympathy with the Kuwaiti and other prisoners and missing persons in Iraq, has launched appeal after appeal for the resolution of this issue so as to close the dossier and promote confidence-building among the countries of the region.

Since he assumed office at the beginning of 1997, the Secretary-General of OIC has accorded this matter his special attention and has called for sustained action to remedy the consequences of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, foremost among them the matter of the Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons.

In the context of his concern, the Secretary-General has missed no opportunity to call for the release of the Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees and for the mitigation of the suffering of the people of Iraq. This has been abundantly evident in the numerous announcements, statements and addresses he has made on frequent occasions, as reflected in many different Secretariat documents.

All of the final communiqués and decisions adopted by successive ministerial conferences and their subsequent coordination meetings have included specific sections calling for the return of the Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons to their homeland and their families. It should be noted that most of the resolutions in question were drafted in coordination with representatives of Kuwait before being submitted to OIC meetings for adoption.

Mr. Vorontsov, the High-level Coordinator for the repatriation of Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons in Iraq and the return of Kuwaiti property seized at the time of the invasion of Kuwait, recently visited the Secretary-General at the seat of the Secretariat. The Secretary-General assured him of full support and cooperation in connection with his mandate and pledged that the Secretariat would maintain close contact with him in the framework of ongoing cooperation between OIC and the United Nations in an endeavour to achieve a positive outcome to the issue of the prisoners. He informed Mr. Vorontsov that he was fully prepared to continue his efforts and indeed to appoint a special representative of OIC to monitor this humanitarian issue should he be asked to do so.

In keeping with the teachings of Islam, which require that a spirit of brotherhood, peace and solidarity should encompass all Muslims, and pursuant to the provisions of the OIC Charter, when the issue first arose with Iraq's invasion of

Kuwait on 8 August 1990 OIC immediately adopted an unequivocal position and hastened to demand an end to military operations and the withdrawal of the invading forces to the internationally recognized Kuwait-Iraq boundaries.

The nineteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, which was held in Cairo two days after the invasion began, lost no time in adopting on 4 August 1990 a special communiqué in which it condemned Iraq's aggression against Kuwait and demanded the immediate withdrawal of the invading forces from Kuwaiti territory and compliance with the principles of the OIC Charter.

The twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Istanbul in August 1991, was the first OIC meeting to address the matter of the Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons directly. In paragraph 43 [i.e. 28] of its final communiqué, it condemned "the procrastination of the Iraqi authorities regarding the implementation of the resolutions concerning the release of Kuwaiti citizens and other detainees in Iraq and called upon the Iraqi authorities for their immediate release" [A/46/486-S/23055, annex I].

Since the invasion, Kuwait has thus received the full support and backing of OIC. It is perhaps this fact that prompted His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, to commend the position taken by OIC in his address to the Sixth Islamic Summit, held in Dakar in 1991. This is a commendation of which the Organization is proud.

OIC pays careful attention to the efforts that continue to be made by the Amir, Government and people of Kuwait and, in their support, by the international community as represented by the United Nations, OIC and the other international and regional organizations concerned. It looks forward to these efforts bringing the desired conclusion to a humanitarian issue that has long troubled the Organization and, God willing, an outcome that can as soon as possible enable family members of the Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons to smile again.